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ABSTRACT

According to Graham Allison's Rational Policymaking Paradigm all the groups participating in a decision-making process act together to assess the problem at hand, to make a thorough search for alternative solutions, and to select the best solution in terms of the values of the decision-making body as a whole. This commonly accepted model is insufficient to describe all cases, however, and Allison offers two alternatives. His Organizational Process Paradigm states that each group in a decision-making body proposes only those alternative solutions that serve the group's self-interest and that final decisions are designed to satisfy at least part of the needs of each of the groups participating. The Bureaucratic Process Paradigm concentrates on intergroup bargaining, power balances, and defined channels for group interaction. A small metropolitan district's response to enrollment decline in the 1970s served as a test of these three paradigms, revealing that while any of the three models might appear to have advantages at a given time, a combined use of all three models appears to yield the most information. The document concludes that the Allison paradigms can be useful but are of limited applicability to the study of educational politics. (Author/PGD)

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TESTING A POPULAR METHODOLOGY: THE GRAHAM ALLISON MODELS

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Preface

A field of study or academic discipline, such as the Politics of Education, requires conceptual frameworks or paradigms around which facts can be organized and analyzed. The purpose of this paper is to test one of the more popular methodologies currently in use in political analysis within an educational setting. Specifically, the Graham Allison policymaking paradigms will be examined not only for their utility in field applications, but also for their value in the process of theory building in the area of educational politics. Indeed, the legitimacy of an area of study can be measured only by the extent to which it contributes to our understanding of the world around us. For the Politics of Education to acquire and maintain such legitimacy, it must have the capability of generating explanatory theories which enhance our knowledge of the mechanics of the political process as it operates within the educational community. Theory building, in turn, is dependent upon the frameworks or paradigms around which facts are organized. The theory will be only as good as the conceptual lens through which facts are analyzed. Thus, an examination of the paradigms currently in use in studying educational politics would appear to be in order, and an examination of the Allison paradigms within the context of the foregoing statements is the point and purpose of this paper.

The Descriptive Process

The body of facts with which the researcher studying in the area of the Politics of Education might be concerned would appear to cluster under two broad headings. "Institutional" phenomena would embrace generic items traditionally associated with organizational studies. Decision making hierarchies, organizational role structure, organization/environment relationships, etc. might all be viewed as issues of importance to the student of educational politics. Equally important are "personal" phenomena most usually associated with socio-political analysis. Identification of community influentials or key-actor participants within the political process acknowledges the fact that the human personality adds a dimension to that political process above and beyond that which can be accounted for purely through organizational analyses.

The problem confronting the person attempting to make some sense of the myriad of facts of both the institutional and personal variety that are identifiable within the domain of educational politics is the development of a useful paradigm or set of paradigms for organizing these facts in some systematic manner. To that end, one must address the question as to whether there is a single best way for analyzing and describing facts.

To be sure, there are those who argue that the so-called "scientific method" is the only valid method

for the description and analysis of any factual phenomenon. The organizing concepts inherent in the scientific method include the existence of a conceptual framework possessing explanatory power with respect to empirical observations against which it is applied. That is to say that, while the framework itself may contain terms of such an abstract nature that they are not readily observable (e.g. "anomie" to the sociologist, or "proton" to the physicist), observable facts must be able to be deduced directly from the framework. Furthermore, the framework must be "falsifiable", that is, repeated empirical observations must be able to, at least potentially, destroy the conceptual underpinnings upon which the framework is constructed. The "scientific method" is most closely associated with the empiricist segment of researchers.

On the other hand, there are those, including Graham Allison, who argue that there are, indeed, more than way of describing and analyzing factual data. Allison's Rational Policymaking Paradigm might be argued for as the framework that most readily lends itself to the type of empirical analysis mandated by the "scientific method." Yet Allison argues that there are sociological and political forces at work in the policymaking process that cannot be reduced to purely empirical statements. Thus he developed his Organizational Process and Bureaucratic Politics Paradigms to account for those forces.

The relative merits of these two opposing points of view, as well as their implications for future

study in the area of the Politics of Education will be discussed in the last portion of this paper. Let us now turn to an examination of each of the three Allison paradigms and to an analytical application of those paradigms in a field setting. Following that, we will discuss the Allison paradigms with respect to their contribution to theory building in the area of educational politics, and we will again address the issue of whether there is one best method for studying this discipline.

The Graham Allison Paradigms

Until recently, analysis of policy decisions has been accomplished, in large part, using a rational conceptual framework. Yehezkel Dror (1968), a leading proponent of rational policy analysis, has devised an elaborate model of the rational decisional process. Rooted largely in the principles of cost-benefit analysis, Dror's model relies heavily upon the value processing element in decision making in which organizational goals are clearly identified and all alternative courses of action are evaluated within the context of the so-called "organizational values." In fact, Dror merely crystallized and neatly packaged a decision making paradigm that had long been used by historians and political scientists in the analysis of public policy decisions. (Allison, 1971). So firmly entrenched is the rational policy analysis paradigm that data processing hardware and

software is available to facilitate the process. (Quade, 1975)

As noted earlier, rational policy analysis employs techniques that are strongly quantifiable and which lend themselves to the "scientific methodology" for research described earlier in this paper. Graham Allison in no way attempted to denigrate the rational policy analysis paradigm, but rather suggested that there might well be other, more useful ways of looking at policy analysis. Allison (1969) analyzed the events surrounding the placement and subsequent withdrawal of Russian missiles in Cuba within the traditional rational analysis framework. He went on to assert, however, that socio-political phenomena unattended by rational analysis might better be explained through other analytical frameworks. Thus were born the "Organizational Process Paradigm" and the "Bureaucratic Politics Paradigm." An explanation of each of the Allison Paradigms will be followed by a field application to test their utility in the analysis of educational decision making.

The Rational Model

The rational policy analysis paradigm presupposes that the basic actor in the decisional process is a unified actor. Translated to an educational setting, the rational model assumes that the "school district" is the decision maker with the component parts of that school district acting in unison. The board of education, central administration, and both teaching and non-teaching personnel

are collectively viewed as a unified force in making decisions affecting the school district. Equally important, those segments of the school community that are external to the school system proper (e.g. local merchants, residents, etc.) are also viewed as members of the decision making body. And again, the underlying theme of the rational model is that all parties to the decision making process ultimately act in unison, creating the impression of a unified actor in the decision making role.

Is this a realistic expectation? Under the ground rules of the rational model, it would appear that such expectations are indeed reasonable. The first step in rational decision making is clear identification of the problem requiring solution. In a school district with rapidly declining enrollment and with school buildings that are not operating at rated capacity, cost efficient operation of the schools might well be identified as the central issue to be addressed. Given the necessity for cutting operating costs within the school district, several alternative courses of action are then projected. The alternatives may range from closing certain buildings and consolidating existing student bodies to eliminating staff positions as a measure for cutting costs in order to generate monies needed to keep open all school buildings currently in operation. How then does one choose among the options?

Dror (1968) argued that rational decision making assumes that governmental action is a function of

choice among alternative courses of action and selection of the course of action that is most desirable Desirability is based upon the "values" of the decision makers, those values having been identified and processed during the preliminary stages of the decisional process, well in advance of laying out alternative courses of action. Returning to the illustration using school consolidation as the focal issue, the values might range from small class sizes to minimizing the busing of children within the school district. The values of the decision makers would have been processed against the backdrop of sound educational theory. The element of decision making that does not appear in the rational model is a sense of parochialism among the component groups of decision makers. Thus, if one argues in favor of keeping a given school open, one will do so on the basis that to close the building and to compel children to be bussed elsewhere in the district would be an educationally unsound decision because the riding time and concomitant fatigue factor would impair the child's learning ability. Any other arguement must also rest on sound educational ground. The values would not take on such provincial tones as "The school has always been in my neighborhood; I went there and so will my children."

Having identified the values of the decision making group, the alternative courses of action are then evaluated against those values and objectives of the decision makers. The consequences of each alternative course

of action will have been fully explored and the degree to which those consequences dovetail with the educational objectives and values of the decision makers acting as a unified actor governs the selection of an ultimate course of action. Thus, rational decision making is grounded in the concept of cost-benefit analysis, with all analyses performed against the backdrop of politically neutral, educationally based values and objectives identified by the decision making body.

The Organizational Process Paradigm

Unlike the rational policy analysis paradigm, the organizational process paradigm does not view the decision maker as a unified actor. Rather, each component group within the decisional unit has its own identity and its own "organizational processes", thereby giving rise to the name of this model.

Within the context of a school system, the component decisional units would be the board of education, the central school administration, the teaching and non-teaching employee units, and possibly, although not necessarily, groups external to the school system proper.

This decision making model views the "decision" as the product of the organizational processes of the component decisional groups. In other words, governmental action is translated as organizational output.

The crucial factor within this paradigm is

the concept of standard operating procedures (SOP's) and programs for action that are in place within each of the component elements of the decisional unit. These SOP's contain a number of characteristics that are patently non-rational in nature. The SOP's tend to address problems in a fashion that Simon (1957) characterizes as "satisficing." That is, the decision maker, operating within the constraints of fiscal and manpower resource limitations, will not conduct an exhaustive search for solutions to a given problem, but will instead serially review available solutions and will settle on the one that appears to most closely "fit" with the existing values and objectives of the decision maker. These values, furthermore, can and will take on parochial overtones. The survival of the particular group or unit within the organizational body engaged in decision making assumes priority status in the hierarchy of values. Thus, any course of action will be viewed by a given group only in a light that assures the perpetuity of that group and its mission.

Returning to the illustration used in the discussion of the rational policymaking paradigm, the following pattern of action might take place. Given the phenomenon of rapidly declining student enrollment and school buildings operating at less than rated capacity, the board of education might begin with an apparently rational step, i.e. calling for alternative solutions to the problem of cost efficient operation of the schools. The first SOP that is observable,

and it is a characteristic SOP for all organizations, is fractionation of the problem. The generation of public support for any course of action might be an area of responsibility assumed by the school board. The generation of sufficient supportive data to sustain a given decision might be the responsibility of the central school district administration who, in turn, would be compelled to work with other employee groups in the extraction of such data. However, the closing of school buildings would logically result in the loss of both faculty and administrative positions. Thus, an association of school administrators or a teachers union could be expected to generate data that would show that a school closing would lead to higher student-teacher ratios and higher student-administrator ratios, a phenomenon which might prove detrimental to the educational and socialization needs of children. Consequently, rather than simply generating data that reflects alternative scenarios resulting from school closings and consolidations, the data reflects the parochial outlook of the group generating it, especially with respect to the need for perpetuating the existence of the group itself. The phenomenon is both predictable and expected. The important underlying principle here, however, is that the data generated is the only data available for making a decision. And the data is the direct product of the standard operating procedures for the group generating it. Therefore, any decision made within the school district will be the product of the organizational output of the

component decisional units, i.e. of the administrators attempting to retain job lines, of faculty unions attempting to hold the negotiating line on class size, job security, etc., and of other groups attempting to serve their own special interests. Similarly, external groups with a full repertoire of SOP's will also enter the picture: the Civil Service regulations govern job layoffs within a school district; due-process regulations govern elimination of faculty lines, etc.

Any decision made as the result of the organizational output of these component groups within and without the school district will not likely be the single course of action arrived at as most desirable from an exhaustive search among competing courses of action. Rather, it will more likely be the product of a limited search for a solution that satisfies at least a portion of the needs of each group within the decision unit, i.e. a satisficing decision. And the decision will be based upon the output from each of those component groups.

The Bureaucratic Politics Model

As with the Organizational Process Paradigm, the Bureaucratic Politics Paradigm presupposes no unified character to the decision maker. Indeed, the underlying concept within the Bureaucratic Politics Paradigm is that of bargaining among and between the component elements of the decision making body.

Each of the component groups within the decision making body is viewed as having its own parochial interests and goals, in much the same fashion as was seen in the organizational process model. However, the major organizing concept within this paradigm is that of bargaining power. Each of the components in the decision making unit is seen as occupying a bargaining position vis-a-vis the other components. The bargaining position is shaped by two factors: the priorities and perceptions of the group which are highly parochial in nature, and the bargaining power it possesses which is largely a function of the control it has over the destinies of the other components. This control, in turn, is governed by such phenomena as possession of available resources, etc. Bargaining positions, and the power associated with them, change over time. Thus, the decisional process is governed by the bargaining process at a particular moment in time, and the process is critically affected by deadlines and the immediacy of the issue being decided.

Again, using the illustration of a school district faced with consolidation problems, the decision making actors would again be defined as the school board, the central administration, the various employee organizations, etc. In this paradigm, additionally, groups and organizations external to the school district play a major role in the decisional process as dictated by the relative bargaining position these groups may hold. The action channels, i.e. the mechanisms and processes through which bargaining is to take place, are

dictated by tradition and legislation. For instance, the relationship between the school board and the community is a traditional one in which the school board, as elected representatives of the community, are expected to remain in touch with that community in formulating school policy. On the other hand, the relationship between the school board and the teachers association is governed by the law that oversees the collective bargaining process and mandates which issues must be negotiated. Consequently, not only are action channels in place, but rules of the game are in force for the bargaining process.

So it is that any decision to close school buildings must be accompanied by collective bargaining with teachers on the issue of class size and elimination of positions. The degree to which both sides can agree on a mutually profitable payoff will dictate the nature of the settlement, and this in turn is governed by the relative bargaining power of both sides. The same assertion holds true for negotiation with other employee organizations. The extent to which the school district is willing to live within the rules of the game, i.e. dealing with tenured teachers, adhering to Civil Service Law, etc., and the degree to which the employee groups make the same concession, i.e. yielding on the issue of loss of positions in return for a sweetened pot in other negotiated areas, determines the extent to which the district can move ahead in closing buildings.

Assuming that the district is able to overcome the

bargaining position of employee associations, the community must then be dealt with. Which schools are to be closed? This question is often answered by other than rational criteria. The school that is closed is very often not the one that is operated most inefficiently. This decision is often shaped by such issues as gain or loss of revenue to local merchants, the apparent political clout of a particular neighborhood (i.e. their ability to get out the vote in a school board election), the neighborhood of residence of school board members and other school district administrators. The essence of the decision is often shaped by the principle of "Where you stand depends on where you sit."

The entire bureaucratic politics paradigm rests on the 51%-49% principle of power sharing. Where the organizational process paradigm saw a decision as the product of a synthesis of the organizational output of all component groups within an organization, the extent to which that output is heeded within the bureaucratic politics paradigm is a function of the percentage of power held by an organizational component. It is not enough to say that a board of education is the legally empowered arm of the State Education Department. That merely stipulates one of the rules of the game. The degree to which the board of education can bargain with other groups in the school district, and do so from a position of power rather than weakness, will determine the extent to which the school board has an impact upon the ultimate decisions of the school district. The same holds true for other groups.

Summary of the Allison Paradigms

Allison (1971) points out that each of his policymaking paradigms suggests questions that can be used as a guide in approaching the analysis of public policy:

The Rational Policymaking Paradigm leads one to ask:

1. What is the problem?
2. What are the goals, objectives, and values of the decision maker?
3. What are the alternative courses of action?
4. What are the costs and benefits associated with each alternative?

The Organizational Process Paradigm leads one to ask:

1. Of what organizations (and organizational components) does the decision unit consist?
2. Which organizations traditionally act on a problem of this sort and with what degree of influence?
3. What repertoires, programs, and SOP's do these organizations have for making information about the problem available to decision makers?
4. What repertoires, programs, and SOP's do these organizations have for generating alternatives about a problem of this sort?
5. What repertoires, programs, and SOP's do these organizations have for implementing alternative courses of action?

The Bureaucratic Politics Paradigm leads one to ask:

1. What are the existing action channels for producing solutions to problems of this kind?
2. Which players in what positions are centrally involved?
3. How do pressures of job, past stances, and personality affect the central players on this issue?
4. What deadlines will force the issue to resolution?
5. Where are miscommunications and/or misperceptions likely to occur?

The true test of utility for the Allison paradigms rests not with theoretical examples such as that used in describing the models, but in the application of

the paradigms to an analysis of concrete policy decisions. Therefore, we focus our attention on the case of a moderately sized, urban school district in a large northeastern state. The vehicle for these analyses is a series of decisions relative to school closings and consolidations that were made in this district from 1971 through 1977. The school district had experienced a greater than 33 percent decline in enrollment during the first half of this decade. Therefore, the school district was in the business of operating more school buildings than were actually needed and operating most of them in an inefficient manner. Additionally, many of the buildings were in need of major repair. Several of the buildings were more than forty years old. Policy decisions had to be made as to whether or not to close schools and/or build new ones. If schools were to be closed, decisions were necessary as to which buildings would be shut down and what policies would be in force governing excessed personnel.

Background for the Analysis

River City is geopolitically viewed as a small city of 60,000 residents. It is essentially an industrial town, serving as the home for three major industries and a large number of small business establishments. The population of River City is largely blue collar, with ethnic origins in Central and Eastern Europe. The community

prides itself as "a nice place to raise a family" and considers its system of neighborhood schools as a strong selling point.

In 1971, the River City School District contracted with a local research firm to work with the District's own Ad Hoc Citizens' Advisory Committee in conducting an in-depth study of all aspects of the school district. The purpose of the study was to provide a data base for the formulation of a ten year master plan of action for the River City Schools. The elements of this study served as the basis for the earliest decisions made by the River City School Board.

Demographics

1. The overall population trend in River City is downward. The population of the City in 1960 was 75,941; in 1970, it was 64,123. In addition to the general downward trend in population, there has been a shift in the composition of the residents of the City. The number of individuals under the age of 20 has decreased 7.5% since 1940; the number of individuals between the ages of 21 and 44 has declined 20% during the same period while the number of individuals over age 45 has increased 20%. In other words, the number of individuals of school age and the number of individuals capable of bearing children is declining in River City while the number of individuals in the "late middle age" and "senior citizen" categories

is increasing. This trend has continued through the decade of the 1970's.

2. The birth rate in the City has declined from a high of about 109 births per 1000 women aged 15 to 44 years in 1960 (actual figure = 1519 births) to about 80 births per 1000 women in 1970 (actual figure = 1125 births).
3. There has been an overall decline of school students from 16,908 in 1960 to 13,674 in 1970. The total enrollment figure dipped below 10,000 in 1977.
4. The overall decline in population has been accompanied by an out-migration of young families with school age children.

Projected Enrollment Patterns

In 1971, the study of the River City Schools projected a continuous decline in enrollment for the school system. The drop was expected to go from 10,899 in 1970 to 10,216 in 1975, a total loss of 673 students. Of the 673 pupils, it was projected that 439, or 67% would be in grades K through 6. The overall secondary school loss from 1970 to 1980 was expected to be just in excess of 900, or slightly more than 18% of the 1970 enrollment. Thus, the enrollment decline would hit hardest in the elementary grades, but would have a long term impact on the high schools which were presently experiencing less severe declines.

The Existing Facilities

In 1971, River City had 12 elementary schools, 3 junior high schools, and 2 senior high schools. An examination of the facilities led the study group to conclude that many of River City's school buildings are old, under-utilized, and undersized. The following data was presented to underscore that evaluation:

TABLE 1

School	Date of Construction
Thoreau Elementary School	1895
East High School	1914
Monroe Elementary School	1915
Johnson Elementary School	1916
McKinley Elementary School	1919
Bronte Elementary School	1922
Hudson Elementary School	1926
Adams Elementary School	1927
West Senior High School	1938

While Table 1 reflects the age of certain of the school district's buildings, Table 2 reflects the problem of under-utilization:

TABLE 2

School	SED Rated Capacity*	1971 Enrollment
Hudson Elementary	900	257
Bronte Elementary	750	334
McKinley Elementary	750	272

* State Education Department recommended capacity to per,it optimal educational program

Similarly, the State Education Department recommends that in order to operate economically and efficiently, an elementary school should accomodate 600 to 700 pupils. Smaller schools cannot offer a full range of educational programs. Yet no fewer than four of River City's 12 elementary schools were well under the SED recommended capacity of 600 to 700 pupils:

TABLE 3

School	Maximum Capacity
Johnson Elementary School	540
Thoreau Elementary School	400
Monroe Elementary School	540
Adams Elementary School	400

Three schools within the district, Smith Elementary, Hoover Elementary, and Bradley Elementary are relatively new. They are of such a size and utilization ratio as to make their operations efficient both educationally and economically. They are attractive, modern, and geared to contemporary educational programs. However, their presence in comparison to other aged, underutilized, and undersized buildings within the School District would appear to point to the inequality of educational opportunity among the neighborhoods of the City.

Fiscal Considerations

During the 1971-72 school year, the River City School District was within $191,892 of the State constitutional taxation limit that it is allowed to tax for operating expenses. Assuming an annual 3% cost of living

increase at the time of the study, by 1982 the required funds for operation of the schools would be $1,579,740 in excess of what can legally be raised by the district.

The cost of rehabilitating buildings within the District was computed, and Table 4 reflects the 1971 figures for such rehabilitation:

TABLE 4

Building	Cost to Rehabilitate (Net cost after deducting allowable state aid from total cost figure)
Hudson Elementary School	$ 1,780,000
Harding Elementary School	993,000
Bronte Elementary School	1,190,000
Washington Elementary School	1,210,000
Adams Elementary School	790,000
Monroe Elementary School	1,070,000
Johnson Elementary School	1,070,000
Thoreau Elementary School	790,000
Bradley Elementary School	---------
Smith Elementary School	---------
Hoover Elementary School	---------
McKinley Elementary School	1,485,000
North Junior High School	1,335,000
South Junior High School	1,662,000
East Senior High School	5,015,000
West Senior High School	3,960,000

Similarly, costs were computed for construction of new buildings, and those costs are reflected in Table 5:

TABLE 5

Building	1971 Cost to Construct (Net cost after deducting allowable state aid from total cost figure)
Elementary School	$ 837,000
Middle School	1,390,000
Single Consolidated High School	5,580,000

The precceding section outlines the conditions in River City in 1971 and the data available to the River City School District in formulating decisions relative to school closings and consolidations. It is now possible to turn to an application of the three Allison paradigms to the events that followed the release of the 1971 report of the Citizens' Ad Hoc Advisory Committee.

Rational Decision Making in River City

The problem facing the River City School District included a steadily declining student enrollment; the presence of aging, underutilized, undersized, and operationally costly school plants; an apparent inequality of educational facilities and opportunities between and among the various neighborhoods of River City.

The stated goals and objectives for the school district were the educationally and economically efficient operation of the City's schools in a manner that would provide equal educational opportunities for all of the children in the City.

Once goals and objectives are identified, it is necessary to identify the full range of available options leading to the desired objectives and, from that range of options, select the optimal plan of action. An analysis of the process is possible through examination of four of the several options available to the River City School District:

1. Rehabilitate all existing buildings in the River City School District.

2. Close Thoreau, Johnson, and Bronte Elementary Schools, these three buildings acknowledged as being in the most advanced stages of deterioration, and consolidate their students in other existing schools. Renovate the remaining school buildings.
3. In addition to the procedure followed in option 2, close East Senior High School and operate West Senior High School, the newer of the two, on a split session.
4. Selectively close the most educationally deficient buildings on a gradual basis, consolidating their students in other existing, refurbished plants and in newly constructed buildings.

It is possible to analyze each of the four options with respect to their contribution toward maximizing the District's goals and objectives:

Option 1 - To rehabilitate all of the buildings in the River City School District would have cost a total of $14,304,750 (See Table 4). To continue to use all of the buildings in the District, even though rehabilitated, would perpetuate the problems associated with the underutilization of facilities while at the same time maintaining the very structures that inhibit flexibility in the educational program thereby fostering inequality of educational opportunity. Unless the school building offers the promise of flexibility as educational trends and programs change over the years, the money spent in rehabilitating the building might better be spent in constructing a new facility. Operating a rehabilitated

school plant at less than capacity enrollment or on plant sites that do not permit a full range of educational programming would be counterproductive to the goals of cost efficiency and equality of opportunity. Finally, the overwhelming cost of modernizing all of the plants must be viewed as a negative factor for this course of action.

Option 2 - Closing Thoreau, Johnson, and Bronte Elementary Schools and consolidating their students in the remaining elementary school plants would produce some measure of cost effectiveness in the elementary school operations. These three elementary schools were in the worst state of disrepair and their elimination would have resulted in substantial savings to the School District. However, looking at the overall picture, goals other than cost efficiency would still be unmet. Older schools such as Monroe and Adams, though refurbished, would still be too small to operate a total elementary school program. Hudson, although rehabilitated, would still not operate at full capacity. And these older school buildings would still lack the flexibility necessary for adaptation to future educational programs. So, while an immediate savings to the District would be realized through closing these three buildings, realization of the long term goals set by the Ad hoc Committee would remain an illusion. The price tag of rehabilitating the other buildings in the District remains large ($12,886,500) when compared with that available through other options.

Option 3 - Just as a modicum of cost effectiveness was

realized in Option 2 by closing the three most inefficient elementary school plants, movement in that direction would be further enhanced by closing East Senior High School, which was constructed in 1914 and had long since outlived its educational viability. The high school operation would then be consolidated into a double session at the renovated West Senior High. However, the goal of educational equality assumes that good, if not ideal, opportunities will be afforded all of the children in the District. The questionable educational value of operating on a double session, the political difficulties in dealing with the Teachers Association over the bargaining table with respect to operational issues arising from double sessions, and other related problems all have the force of detracting from this option. Additionally, there is the constant problem of a 35 year old building which, although rehabilitated, is so structurally rigid that it precludes such educational modifications as expandable classrooms, lecture centers, adequate library space, etc. The price tag for this option is $10,554,525 which, although the lowest of the options discussed here, nonetheless does not permit the District to fully realize the non-fiscal objectives of consolidation.

Option 4 - By closing buildings which are underutilized, which project no enrollment gains, which are too costly to repair, which had become educationally obsolete, or any combination of the preceeding, and by constructing new facilities and renovating those still capable of rendering service,

the objectives of the Ad Hoc Committee could be realized:

TABLE 6

Buildings to be Closed:

Thoreau Elementary
East Senior High
Monroe Elementary
McKinley Elementary
Bronte Elementary
Hudson Elementary
Adams Elementary
West Senior High

Buildings to be Renovated:

Harding Elementary
Washington Elementary
Smith Elementary
North Junior High
South Junior High

Buildings to be Constructed

One new elementary school
One new middle school
One new senior high school

Master Plan:

Relocation into K-5 Elementary Schools:
- Bronte and McKinley to New Elementary School
- Adams and Monroe to renovated Smith Elementary
- Johnson and Thoreau to Bradley Elementary
- Hudson and Hoover to renovated Washington Elementary

Relocation to 6-8 Middle Schools:
- McKinley, Monroe, Bronte, Smith, and Adams to East Middle School
- Washington, Johnson, Thoreau, and Bradley to New Middle School
- Hudson, Hoover, and Harding to North Middle School

Relocation to 9-12 High School
- Consolidation of existing East and West Senior High Schools into new consolidated senior high school

Total Pricetag: $14,150,000

Thus, while the pricetag for Option 4 is somewhat higher than that for the other options, the fact that Option 4 permits a fuller realization of the other, non-fiscal objectives of the Ad Hoc Committee Report, offsets the disdavantages associated with the higher pricetag. The rational decision maker, having weighed the value maximiza-

tion properties of all of the options, selects that option which most fully contributes to the realization of all stated goals and objectives, not simply the fiscal ones. In the judgement of the Ad Hoc Committee, Option 4 met that test and was so recommended for adoption as the official course of action for the River City School District.

Organizational Processes in the River City School District

The organizational components that operated in the earliest phases of consolidation activities in the River City School District can be identified as the school board, the Ad Hoc Committee, the central administration of the School District, and the local research and development group with whom the District contracted for assistance in the consolidation process.

a. Standard Operating Procedures - Faced with a complex problem of the nature of school closings and consolidations, the River City School District has characteristically sought support of the community through creation of an Ad Hoc Citizens' Committee, and giving that committee full authority to contract for whatever supportive services deemed necessary. Thus, the Ad Hoc Committee created in this instance contracted with the local research and development firm for supportive computer services that permitted the simulation of numerous alternative options for the school district.

The central administration of the school

district had traditionally accepted the recommendations of Ad Hoc Committees and forwarded those recommendations to the Board of Education which in turn adopted them as school district policy. This process generally enjoyed the support of local PTA groups which were given the opportunity for input at some point during the process.

b. Organizational Output - Having contracted with the development firm, the Ad Hoc Committee produced a series of recommendations that were rational in nature, that is, based upon their contribution value toward the overall objectives of the school district. As noted, however, long range planning of the rational variety may be institutionalized for cosmetic purposes, then disregarded. Such was the case here. The Board of Education, as predicted through traditional SOP's, adopted the recommendations of the Ad Hoc Committee, released their report to the public, which also predictably rebelled against the closing of neighborhood schools. So while some tribute was paid to the principle of long range planning, the full report of the Committee was relegated to the dusty shelf of the Board Room, never to be heard from again.

The Central Administration, embodied in the person of the Superintendent of Schools, relied upon the traditional practice of advising the School Board on future policies and courses of action. Reading the community reaction to a 14 million dollar proposal for consolidation, the Superintendent recommended that the District

move forward and construct the new buildings called for in the report prior to any large scale closings or consolidations. Specifically, he urged that the school district move ahead with the construction of the elementary and middle school buildings, both of which were low cost items.

The board of education, on the other hand, saw the high school building as the jewel in the report and, although the cost figure was substantially higher than either of the two smaller buildings, urged that it be constructed.

The local Parent Teacher groups, sensing that schools within their immediate neighborhoods might be closed, voiced opposition to any school closings and aligned themselves with local taxpayer groups in opposition to any massive change in the status quo within the District.

c. Organizational Action - No matter how compelling the case for consolidation along the rational lines developed within the Ad Hoc Committee's report, the output of the various sub groups within the school district's organization had the effect of freezing any movement in the consolidation process. The organizational action that resulted from the collective organizational output ran as follows: As noted, the Board of Education adopted the recommendations of the Ad Hoc Committee, then promptly tabled them following their release to and reaction from the public. Reading that public reaction, the Board froze any further consolidation until the matter was "studied." The choices for future action were narrowed down

to the Superintendent's recommendation for construction of the new elementary and middle schools, and the Board's desire for construction of a new consolidated high school. Primary power rests with primary responsibility; therefore, the Board priority for a new high school was the adopted plan of action. Predictably, according to established SOP's, a new Ad Hoc Committee was constituted, a new consultant firm was contracted, and movement on a high school was begun.

d. Overall Result - Three of the buildings in River City were closed; Thoreau, Johnson, and Bronte Elementary Schools. Their students were consolidated with other student bodies. The chances are that such a process would have occurred anyway as the State Education Department had repeatedly voiced its displeasure over continued operation of the three buildings. Moreover, no new construction was taking place, nor were existing buildings being renovated. What movement did take place was in the direction of a new single high school, and that movement took the shape of a new committee to study the process by which the school would be constructed. The change that occurred from the situation that existed prior to 1971 can only be characterized as incremental. The action that followed the release of the Ad Hoc Committee report on consolidation in no way resembled the content of the original report. The product of the organizational activity can easily be viewed as the synthesis of events occuring within subgroups of the total organization.

Bureaucratic Politics in River City

The nomination of an Ad Hoc Committee to propose recommendations on consolidation for the Board of Education must be viewed as an acknowledgement of the political necessity of enlisting community support for consolidating activities.

The reactions to and actions emmanating from issuance of the original Ad Hoc Committee Report are every bit as political as the nomination of the Committee itself. The underestimation of community attachment to the principle of neighborhood schools could be seen in public reaction to the proposed closing of eight school buildings and the concomitant transportation via school bus of students to other buildings within the district. The fact that three school buildings, rather than eight, were closed can be viewed as a political action when one views the neighborhoods in which they were located. Each of the three schools which were closed was located in a neighborhood of low economic wealth, little or no political influence, and no organized community action center. On the other hand, two additional schools which were originally targeted for closing, but which remain open at this writing, are located in affluent neighborhoods, characterized by extremely active and well organized PTA groups. Perhaps more importantly, they are neighborhoods in which an overwhelming majority of the Board of Education resides. Indeed, the subsequent decision to

re-form an Ad Hoc Committee to study the feasibility of construction of a new senior high school can be viewed as the product of a stalemate situation between and among the Board of Education, the Superintendent, the PTA's and other community groups, none sufficiently strong enough alone to impose its will on the others.

The Bureaucratic Politics Paradigm is especially appropriate for examing events that have occurred in River City subsequent to the decision to move forward on a new high school. A brief overview of those events will suggest the model's utility:

1. The Board of Education moved from an appointive to an elective status in 1974; Since that time, candidates running for the Board have used the high school as an election issue.
2. The media took a benign role in the high school issue until the School District acted in a manner which appeared to show favoritism to one of the City's two daily newspapers. Since then, the content and tenor of reporting has markedly changed, as have editorial positions.
3. Selection of a site for the new high school has produced a series of power plays, some overt, some clandestine, on the part of the Mayor, City Council, downtown merchant's association, Chamber of Commerce, private property owners, and persons within the school district organization.
4. It has been charged that plans to move ahead on the acquisition of a site for the new high school were intentionally

sabotaged by a member of the School Board who wished to run for Congress but needed an issue to attract local visibility.

The fact that ground has not been broken seven years after the School District opted to move ahead on a new high school is the result of a series of events that have strongly political overtones. Individuals, groups, and alliances, each steeped in parochial interests ranging from no busing of students, to a lower school tax bill, to the desire of an individual for a congressional seat, have shaped both the decisions and non-decisions that surround the high school issue. Analysis of such events can be accomplished only through a conceptual lens that allows for political considerations.

Summary of River City Study

It would appear that since educational decisions, more often than not, are not isolated entities but rather a series of events that determine future patterns of action, a variety of conceptual lenses might be needed to view those decisions.

Allison's Rational Paradigm would appear useful in analyzing decisions with a cost effective basis. If the River City School District were simply concerned with adoption of a plan that would save the school district the largest number of dollars in consolidating, the options spelled out in the discussion of this paradigm would have filled the bill. However, other non-fiscal values were to

be maximized as well. When dealing with non-tangible values such as "educational equality", the rational model falls short. Indeed, Simon (1956) argued that the full range of values that should enter into a decision can never be catalogued and, as a result, decisions can be at best only intendedly rational.

The inability to rationalize all of the values surrounding the consolidation process renders the Organizational Process Paradigm useful because of its emphasis on satisficing decisions. The events that occurred in River City are demonstrably the product of organizational SOP's and invariably led to a situation in which only incremental portions of the consolidation plan would be adopted, while the remainder was shelved.

The decision to move toward a new high school led to a series of events which are patently political in nature, and which readily lend themselves to an analysis in terms of power position and bargaining when viewed through Allison's bureaucratic-political lens. The inactivity in terms of consolidation that has existed in River City since 1974 can be seen as the product of political paralysis rather than organizational lethargy.

Familiarity with the components of each of the Allison paradigms permits a useful analysis of a long term series of events. At any given instant, one specific model might appear to have advantages over the others. In the long term, however, a serial application of each of the three paradigms appears to yield the most information.

Critiquing the Allison Paradigms

This paper is titled "Testing a Popular Methodology: the Graham Allison Models." Particular emphasis should be placed upon the use of the Allison Paradigms as methodologies, and at the same time, a clear distiction must be drawn to underscore that the Allison Paradigms are not a part of the body of theory in the area of the Politics of Education. As methodologies, the Allison Paradigms are useful, but suffer from certain important deficiencies. If one attempts to view the paradigms as theory, the deficiencies become fatal.

One might argue that the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962 was an event of such magnitude that it, alone, can serve as a vehicle for the types of analyses Allison suggests in structuring his paradigms. To be sure, as educational researchers, we felt that application of certain aspects of each of the three paradigms to the situation in River City was perhaps straining the limits of legitimate research.

The body of literature assailing the concept of purely rational policymaking is rich. Simon (1956), as noted earlier, has suggested that neither human intellect nor available fiscal resources are present in sufficient quantities to permit the generation of all possible alternative courses of action within a given problem solving setting. The notion of "satisficing" decision making was a cornerstone for Lindblom's (1959) treatise on incremental decision making. To be sure, a local school district is quite unlike the federal

government in terms of capacity for generating and simulating alternative courses of action. While the data surrounding the initial decisions in River City were cast in a rational light in the earlier discussion of the Rational Paradigm, one must be on constant guard for the possibility that the data fits the model rather than the model fitting the data. In other words, one must be alert to the possibility that data can be collected in such a manner as to make decisions appear rational when, in fact, other agendas than cost benefit analysis might have been in operation.

Similarly, one must wonder whether the application of the Organizational Process Paradigm to a local school district is fully as appropriate as its application to large federal bureaucracies. The existence of true standard operating procedures for a Board of Education whose composition changes every year is an area for some question. The same might be said for local PTA's and similar civic and community groups. While a repertoire of problem solving programs and strategies might be ascribed to the central school administration of a major school district, is it realistic to make the assumptions for other groups not having the same day to day contact with the school district's problems? And does the assumption hold up as one moves to progressively smaller school districts where the rate of turnover of administrative staff is higher than that in larger districts? Again, one must ask if Allison's paradigms are not best applied to larger governmental units.

It appears to the authors that Allison's Bureaucratic Politics Paradigm would be most useful in studying a local school district, assuming that one is prepared to move away from purely rational decisional analyses. The notions of "chiefs and indians", "power and position", "rules for bargaining", etc. seem to hold for any gathering of more than three people.

Perhaps the major criticism that we have for Allison's paradigms following our application of them in River City is their failure to go beyond merely providing a stage for the study of the decision making process. While the Rational Paradigm clearly spells out the context for a cost-benefit analysis of educational decisions, it does not explain why educational institutions fail to make rational decisions. Nor does the Organizational Process Paradigm fully explain the organizational behaviors that occur within a school district. Simply identifying organizational components and their repertoires of SOP's does not explain why a given SOP is in place. The whole concept of organizational boundary spanning is largely ignored by this paradigm and yet is a crucial concept in organizational analyses. Finally, the Bureaucratic Politics Paradigm, while more than adequate in suggesting how to identify the players and the rules of the game, does not explain the concept of "power" or of "bargaining position", etc.

We in no way want to denigrate the Allison Paradigms or to suggest that they are of no value. We want

instead to simply stress the limitations of the paradigms. The Allison Paradigms are extremely useful ways of looking at educational decision making. They offer the opportunity to go beyond traditional, rational decision making models and to account for sociological and political factors that may enter into the decisional process and which are not addressed by rational models. But that is all that Allison's paradigms are - a useful methodology, an appropriate way of viewing things. Allison sets the stage for analysis of a policymaking activity. The theoretical choreographing however, must be done through the literature. The Webers, Simons, Neustadts, Dahls, etc. must provide the theoretical underpinnings for explanation. Allison would probably agree with this statement; he generously cited his theoretical underpinnings in structuring the paradigms.

As a methodology, then, one must be certain that the setting for application of the paradigms is appropriate. As noted, the authors remain unconvinced that a smaller, local school district is richly textured to the point where it can accomodate the nuances of each of the Allison Paradigms. And as suggested, it may be that only a retrospective view of an event of the magnitude of an international crisis such as the Cuban Missile Episode can provide an adequate stage for the Allison models. The authors are not suggesting abandonment of the Allison models, but rather attention to the setting in which they are applied and to the possibility that modification of

the paradigm might occasionally be in order. Repeated application of the models to larger educational settings such as state education departments or major institutions of higher education might lend further evidence of the utility or lack of utility of the Allison Paradigms to educational policymaking.

Implications for the Study of the Politics of Education

The Allison Paradigms permit analysis of decisions along both the institutional and personal dimensions described at the outset of this paper. Throughout the applications of the paradigms to the River City setting, explanation in terms of both organizational behavior and human personality was apparent. As the vehicle for an expanded, multiple paradigmatic approach to analysis of ploicymaking, the Allison models substantially enlarge the tools available for studying the decisionmaking process.

The difficulty with Allison arises in its nature as a methodology. The Allison Paradigms clearly lend themselves to application within the context of the so-called "single case study." This fact invariably leads to the controversy over empirical versus phenomenological approaches to research. The authors cannot and will not address the issue of the relative merits of the two schools. Argu ments over whether generalization is possible within the area of administrative theory is best left to others. Rather, we simply want to raise points of interest with

respect to the relationship of the Allison Paradigms to theory building within the Politics of Education.

Popper (1959) in The Logic of Scientific Discovery, outlined the general rules for theory building, rules which are largely accepted within the behavioral and social sciences today. The essence of his position was that, although theory may contain abstract concepts, anything deduced from the theoretical framework must be empirically testable. The concept of empirical testability is a notion with which proponents of the Allison methodology must come to terms.

If the Allison Paradigms are to be used in construction of theory within the Politics of Education, theorists must, of course, be aware that the demand for empirical content will be forthcoming from many quarters of the academic community. Just as it is frequently argued that a single set of empirical findings are not enough to falsify a theory, the reverse argu ment that a case study approach is not appropriate for theory building must also be granted hearing. To be sure, the application of the Allison Paradigms, whatever their methodological shortcomings, greatly enhanced our understanding of what has taken place in River City since 1971. But what generalizations come out of the River City Study? Phenomemnologists would argue that generalizations are not important, that understanding of the "truth" of River City is all that matters. We said we would not address the relative merits

of such a position, and we will not; however, we are compelled to point out that the view of the phenomenologist is not shared by the majority of social scientists, and problems of credibility would accrue to those who build theory on such a foundation.

It appears to the authors that the problem is not irreconcilable. The Allison models are ideal for case studies, but with certain modifications, might also be adapted to nonparametric comparative studies. It is doubtful that, with the large amounts of information required by the Allison Paradigms, that a researcher would want an "N" greater than 30. However, the sophisticated nonparametric packages now available to researchers should prove attractive to the social scientist wanting to use a modified Allison approach to a correlational study.

If the student of educational politics is to come to terms with concepts such as community power groups, administrative decision making, rational policy-making on boards of education, etc. the Allison models are useful, especially in the case study setting. If a body of theory is to be ascribed to the Politics of Education, it is not necessary to discard the Allison models altogether. However, one must come to terms with the limitations of those paradigms both in terms of the setting and manner in which they are applied, but also in terms of the implications of their use within the context of traditional views of theory building. These are altogether

real issues that must be addressed by members of the Politics of Education Association, and other educational researchers interested in this discipline.

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